



## **TESTIMONY REGARDING THE OFFICE OF THE HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**February 23, 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. (The Center) is a private, non-profit organization headquartered in Mansfield, Connecticut with offices in Washington, DC and throughout the nation. The Center provides education and legal assistance to advance fair access to Medicare and health care. We represent Medicare beneficiaries throughout the state, respond to approximately 6,500 calls and emails annually, and host two websites. The Center also provides written and electronic materials, education, and expert support for Connecticut's CHOICES health insurance, counseling and assistance program, and provides a wide array of other services for Medicare beneficiaries throughout Connecticut and the United States.

### **GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PROPOSAL TO MERGE THE OFFICE OF HEALTHCARE ADVOCATE (OHA) WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION AND TO REDUCE THE OHA STAFF WILL CREATE HARM AND WILL NOT SAVE THE STATE MONEY**

The Center for Medicare Advocacy has extensive experience working with the Office of the Healthcare Advocate on behalf of people who have been denied fair access to health care coverage and necessary health care. We have worked effectively together on many occasions to assist individuals navigate complex private and public health coverage issues and to work for systemic change to enhance fair access to coverage.

## CONCLUSION

The Center for Medicare Advocacy supports the independence and budget of the Office of the Healthcare Advocate. We urge the legislature to do the same. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Please contact me if I can provide anything further.

Respectfully submitted,

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